

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO WORKLOAD POLICY AND PROCEDURES (WLPP) FOR FACULTY AND LIBRARIANS

- FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS -

GENERAL

1. WHEN DOES THE POLICY NEED TO BE IN PLACE?

Unit Heads should begin to assemble committees and then begin work over the summer months and into the autumn, with a view to having the policy drafted by January 2012, in order to allow for decanal or provostial approval by February 15, 2012. Until the policy is approved, current practices will apply. Since teaching and service for 2011-12 will have already been assigned, it may take a full academic year before the policy can be fully implemented.

2. OUR UNIT ALREADY HAS A WORKLOAD POLICY OR PRACTICE —DO WE NEED TO DO THIS?

If you already have a policy or practice in place, this is a good opportunity to review it, determine whether it is working for you, and make changes as needed. If your existing policy is an informal one, it will have to be formalized, and agreed by a unit committee with wide representation. It will be necessary to have formal approval for your policy at the decanal/Provostial level as appropriate.

3. OUR UNIT IS UNLIKE ANY OTHER AT THE UNIVERSITY—HOW CAN THE WLPP APPLY TO US?

The WLPP was intentionally designed not to be a “one size fits all” policy. It is up to the individual Unit to determine what the most appropriate balance of activities (teaching, research and service) will be for its faculty members. In the case of the Library, there will be a single Librarian Workload Policy created by a committee chaired by the Chief Librarian.

4. CREATING, IMPLEMENTING AND MAINTAINING A WORKLOAD POLICY WILL TAKE TIME AND COMMITMENT—WON'T THIS JUST ADD TO THE WORKLOAD OF FACULTY MEMBERS (SPECIFICALLY, THEIR SERVICE LOAD)?

It is clear that at the outset time will need to be spent on developing or revising a policy. In many cases, the Unit will likely have existing practices that function well and so it will just be a matter of formalizing and seeking approval for the policy. On the other hand, if existing practices do not meet the Unit's needs, improvements in the distribution of workload as a result of a formal policy should more than offset the additional effort of developing a policy. It is also important to keep in mind that the size and composition of the Unit Workload Policy Committee will be determined at the Unit level and that while membership should be representative, it need not include faculty members who may already be heavily involved in other committee work.

5. WILL THE UNIT WORKLOAD POLICY TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER WORKLOAD PROVISIONS IN A FACULTY MEMBER'S CONTRACT OR LETTER OF OFFER?

Yes. If the Unit Workload Policy necessitates a change in the workload stipulated in an individual letter of offer or contract (for example, in the interest of equity), then it will be necessary to alter the workload provisions as outlined in the faculty member's contract or letter of offer. **Importantly, you will need to give the faculty member reasonable notice, in writing, of the change in workload provisions.**

A review of existing letters of offer or contracts may also be a good starting point for defining workload norms for the unit.

6. GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING RESEARCH, TEACHING AND SERVICE ARE ALREADY PART OF THE PTR SCHEME—SHOULD WE AVOID DEFINING THE SAME EXPECTATIONS IN THE UNIT WORKLOAD POLICY?

The purpose of the PTR scheme is to assess and recognize merit, whereas the purpose of the Unit Workload Policy is to ensure the fair, reasonable and equitable distribution of workload. The policies should be complementary and may well overlap. Ideally, the clarification of expectations in the Unit Workload Policy should help faculty members in the PTR process.

7. HOW CAN OUR WORKLOAD POLICY ACCOUNT FOR CHANGING PRIORITIES AND TARGETS IN THE UNIT OR ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY—FOR EXAMPLE, AN INCREASE IN BUDGETARY CROSS-APPOINTMENTS?

Units are required to review their policies at least every three years. This review may take into account not only the internal functionality of the policy, but also any change in external circumstances.

8. IN SINGLE DEPARTMENT FACULTIES IN WHICH THE DEAN CHAIRS THE UNIT WORKLOAD POLICY COMMITTEE, WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS?

In this case the Unit Workload Policy is approved (or rejected with explanation) by the Vice-President and Provost.

9. OUR PROGRAM SPANS THREE DIFFERENT UNITS ACROSS THREE CAMPUSES—CAN WE DETERMINE OUR WORKLOAD POLICY BY JOINT COMMITTEE?

This has potential where appropriate, but the policy of each Unit must still be approved by the relevant Dean. In the case of the Library, there will be a single Librarian Workload Policy Committee chaired by the Chief Librarian.

10. WHAT IF THERE ARE INEQUITIES BETWEEN WORKLOAD EXPECTATIONS IN MY UNIT AND A COMPARABLE UNIT ON ANOTHER CAMPUS?

A Tricampus Joint Committee will be established to examine workload matters for faculty and librarians to prevent significant discrepancies within departmental/disciplinary areas across the three campuses.

11. WHAT IF THERE ARE INEQUITIES BETWEEN WORKLOAD EXPECTATIONS IN COGNATE UNITS WITHIN A MULTI-DEPARTMENT FACULTY?

Each Unit Workload Policy Committee is responsible only for the workload norms, standards or ranges internal to that Unit, though it may be appropriate to consider practices in cognate Units. In multi-department faculties, it is the responsibility of the Dean to approve or reject the Unit Workload Policy of each Unit, and to request revision where warranted.

12. WILL THE WORKLOAD ASSIGNMENTS OF EACH FACULTY MEMBER BE AVAILABLE TO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE UNIT?

The Unit Workload Policy will be available and the Chair or Dean will have a record of individual assignments in writing. Upon request, the Chair or Dean may share the individual assignments with members of their Unit.

13. WHAT IF A MEMBER IS UNHAPPY WITH THEIR WORKLOAD ASSIGNMENT?

Section 10 of the WLPP outlines the dispute resolution process. Issues should be resolved in a timely fashion to prevent any interference with course offerings.

TEACHING

14. DOES A FACULTY MEMBER'S TEACHING ASSIGNMENT HAVE TO BE THE SAME EVERY YEAR? SOMETIMES CIRCUMSTANCES AND SCHEDULING MAKE THIS IMPOSSIBLE.

When anomalous situations occur, the overall teaching load should be balanced out over a period of two or three years. In addition, your policy can take into account factors such as the following in determining teaching loads:

- Temporary reductions in teaching (and service) loads for pre-tenure/pre-promotion faculty;
- Changing duties, for example moving in and out of administrative roles;
- Career awards which alter the expected distribution of research and teaching;
- Voluntary summer session teaching, in Units where this is allowed.

15. WILL FACULTY BE PERMITTED TO "BUY OUT" THEIR COURSES?

The University expects all faculty to engage in classroom-based teaching, and the WLPP does not provide for individual buy-outs of teaching or service responsibilities. If reduced responsibilities are associated with a specific career path, stage or award, your Unit Workload Policy should clearly address how this is to be dealt with in these specific situations.

16. FACULTY IN OUR UNIT ENGAGE IN VERY DIFFERENT KINDS OF TEACHING—LARGE CLASSES, SEMINARS, LABS, STUDIOS, TUTORIALS, ETC.—HOW CAN WE POSSIBLY DETERMINE WHAT AN EQUITABLE TEACHING LOAD WOULD BE?

The different types of teaching activities undertaken by your faculty will have to be acknowledged in your workload policy. Usually the best way to compare different activities is to come up with a schedule of equivalencies.

17. WON'T THE SUPERVISION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS PREVENT US FROM DETERMINING AN EQUITABLE TEACHING LOAD? SOME FACULTY SUPERVISE SEVERAL STUDENTS AND OTHERS FEW OR NONE. MOREOVER, SOME SUPERVISION ACTIVITIES REQUIRE FAR MORE ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT THAN OTHERS.

The teaching load of your Unit should encompass all activities related to teaching, including supervisory responsibilities. Your policy may need to include a system of equivalencies that covers, for example, the types of supervisory activities, the number and level of supervised students, etc.

18. THE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN INVOLVED IN CLASSROOM TEACHING IS ALREADY VERY HEAVY FOR OUR UNIT. WON'T IT BE TOO MUCH TO INSIST ON A SPECIFIED SERVICE LOAD ON TOP OF THIS?

Your Unit should design whatever policy works best for its needs. Administrative activities related to teaching can be included in overall teaching load by a schedule of equivalencies.

SERVICE

19. HOW SPECIFICALLY DO SERVICE EXPECTATIONS HAVE TO BE DEFINED IN THE WORKLOAD POLICY?

This is up to your Unit Workload Policy Committee. It may work best to leave the service requirement as a percent allocation, to tie service to a specific range of activities, or to explicitly quantify it. However the service requirement is defined, the Unit Head will have to provide each member with a written assignment of specific duties.

20. HOW MEANINGFUL ARE QUANTITATIVE MEASUREMENTS OF ACTIVITIES LIKE COMMITTEE SERVICE? DOESN'T A WORKLOAD POLICY RISK MISSING THE QUALITY OF A FACULTY MEMBER'S EFFORTS IN SUCH AREAS?

The Unit Workload Policy can be as general or specific in assigning service duties as is appropriate and practical. You may want to quantify activities according to a simple count, a common measure like FTE or clock hours, or a system of equivalencies; alternately you may want to leave more room for qualitative interpretation of satisfying service expectations.

21. OFTEN SERVICE OR TEACHING REQUIREMENTS ARE NOT CLEAR AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR. HOW CAN WE CONSISTENTLY ASSIGN DUTIES IF WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY WILL BE?

Additional assignments may become necessary in the course of an academic year if unforeseen circumstances arise. If it becomes necessary for a faculty member to take on additional assignments (or to reduce existing ones), this deviation should be appropriately documented and balanced out in subsequent years.

RESEARCH

22. HOW CONSTRAINED ARE UNITS IN NOT DEFINING RESEARCH LOAD IN THE POLICY?

The *Memorandum of Agreement* recognizes that faculty members have the basic responsibilities of teaching; research, scholarly or creative activity; and service. It is up to individual Units to determine the balance of these components of a faculty member's activities; however, research, scholarly or creative activity is entirely self-directed. In other words, research load can be allocated but not assigned like teaching and service.

23. DOES THE POLICY PROVIDE THE CAPACITY TO DEAL WITH RESEARCH-INACTIVE FACULTY?

Not as such, because only teaching and service activities can be specifically assigned. Your Unit Workload Policy can state the expected distribution of teaching, research and service, but cannot be used as a disciplinary tool.

24. IF OUR POLICY CAN'T STIPULATE SPECIFIC RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS, WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT FACULTY WHO ARE UNPRODUCTIVE IN RESEARCH?

The WLPP does not address performance issues; these should be discussed with the Vice Provost, Faculty & Academic Life. However, your Unit Workload Policy can build in norms or accommodate strategies that may be helpful:

- Transparency to encourage a culture of equity
- A system of equivalencies that gives faculty a range of options to satisfy expectations
- Presenting the faculty member with the option of an allocation of duties that is more teaching-intensive than the norm (this may be agreed upon, but not imposed)